which is the canalising agency for Bangalore Rose Onions, three other agencies, namely the Karnataka State Cooperative Marketing Federation Limited, the Spices Trading Corporation of India Limited and the North Karnataka Onion Growers Cooperative Society Limited have been designated as canalising agencies for export of other varieties of onion. The quantity of onion already released for export by these agencies has not been fully utilised.

Excess procurement of tobacco in Karnataka

3071. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether farmers of Karnataka produced 9 million kilo more tobacco than the allocation in 1999-2000 and 16 million kilo more in 2000-2001; and

(b) the action proposed to probe how the Tobacco Board instead of issuing notice to the concerned official, purchased the entire excess produce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The farmers of Karnataka produced 8.02 million kilograms of excess tobacco in the 1999-2000 season and 18.25 million kilograms in the 2000-01 season. Permission was granted by Government for the sale of the excess tobacco on the auction platforms of the Tobacco Board, subject to a penalty of 5% and an extra fee of Rs. 2 per kilogram. This decision was in tune with the general policy of permitting the sale of unauthorised tobacco subject to payment of penalties so as to check illegal transactions outside the auction platforms of the Tobacco Board. In addition, prosecution action is initiated against growers who have produced tobacco in excess of the authorised quantity and unregistered growers who have produced tobacco unauthorisedly.